The COMMONWEAL

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Christmas 1942

THIS is our first war Christmas. Last December we were too shocked adequately to realize our new status, and the national war effort was barely under way. Now, although the fighting is thousands of miles from our shores, we are experiencing war's impact. A million men are overseas; several millions more have left their homes and their daily work for training in various service camps throughout the nation. And our forces have now taken the offensive for the first time—in North Africa. Business has been transformed and there are a few civilian restrictions and annoyances, but it is the absence of our loved ones, our anxiety about them and our longing to rejoin them that make Americans part of this terrible war. We are one in suffering and anxiety and hope for victory with the conquered peoples of Europe and the Far East and the brave people who have stemmed the Axis tide. We are caught up in an all-out war.

Never have the Advent hymns and antiphons of the Office or the prayers from the Advent season Masses seemed more apposite, more an answer to the burden in our hearts. Through all these prayers and exhortations runs the thread of the hope of deliverance—the hope of the coming of the Messias. According to the Christian tradition His is a threefold coming: the historic birth of Christ among men two thousand years ago, the birth or renewal of Christ in men's hearts down through the ages since, and the coming of Christ in glory at the Last Judgment when God's justice finally will be fulfilled. The exhortations to make the way straight for His coming throughout the Advent Season urge men here and now by prayer and penance to prepare their hearts for His coming. Just as the constant Advent theme of deliverance expresses the aspirations of war-torn humanity, so does the Liturgy of Christmas express our hopes of peace. For as Dom Virgil Michel wrote of Christmas in his book on the Liturgy of the Church, "In the darkness of the longest night, in the night of the year, the midwinter season when all the earth is dead and darkness is preponderant, in the darkness of the day of human existence when man was still enshrouded in the obscuring veil of Satan, God 'made this most holy night to shine forth with the brightness of the true light' (collect, Midnight Mass)."

Americans Must Take the Lead

FROM the very morrow of hostilities, in a September of 1939 which now seems almost as remote as Thermopylae, we began urging relief for those in Europe who needed relief. It began with Poland, and then went down the roster—Finland and Norway and the Low Countries, France, Greece. . . . We have argued in season and out that it was not only Christian but highly expedient to send food into conquered countries. The obligation is still with us to do at least a minimum, so that we may find a few less corpses when our troops land on European soil, a few more live and half-healthy people to liberate. And especially young people . . .

The objections to sending foodstuffs into enemy-held territory can best be indicated by four simple questions. (1) Have we the wherewithal on hand? (2) How pay the bill? (3) How ship it abroad? (4) Once it gets there, can we be sure it will be used for the purposes intended? All other opposition boils down to blind acceptance of some *ipse dixit* by certain English people, a handful of French, Belgians, Dutch, and, unfortunately, to the general attitude of the Russian relief organization.

We are convinced that if these four questions can be satisfactorily answered, the vast majority of Americans would favor sending food, especially for young people and the aged. Adults can stand starvation and recover; youth is affected, not only in death and disease, but, far worse, in its moral health. The fanatical generation of young nazis is, in a very real way, a scourge to punish us for a sin we ourselves abetted. We run the risk of winning this war—only to curse our children with a whole European generation as brutal, as heartless, as disillusioned as the young men who sup-

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plied Hitler with the backbone of his street gangs in the late twenties, and his Party with its backbone today.

It seems that these questions can, so far, be answered more satisfactorily than our bravest hopes a year ago might have led us to believe. Here are the answers. (1) Yes, we can well afford the foodstuffs, if we enlist South American help. Canada and ourselves have a huge surplus of cereals and vitamins. South America has a surplus of meat and fats. (2) The various governments in exile have all the money needed for some time to come; they can pay cash from British, American and South American banks. Certainly what deficiencies might arise could be supplied here; Americans have always been generous in such causes. (3) Sweden particularly, but also Portugal, Spain and even Switzerland, have bottoms which cannot be used for war purposes and which are now largely idle. (4) With the approval of both the British and American governments, food and clothing have been shipped to "Unoccupied" France and are being sent to Greece. Millions of pounds of food have been shipped to war prisoners *in Germany itself*. Our own State Department has certified that the supplies sent to Greece have been properly distributed. No abuses are reported by reputable agencies in what was done for France. Great Britain has permitted millions of prisoners' packages to be sent during the months of this current year; is it likely she would have done so had she thought they were giving aid and comfort to the enemy?

The operational procedure is simple—once official consent has been secured. Food is shipped to Lisbon or any other appropriate port, preferably under the flag of the International Red Cross. Thence it is shipped to distribution centers conducted or supervised by the same agency, with cooperation from Swedish charitable organizations. The beneficiaries—the children and adolescents and aged—come there in person, and either consume the food on the premises, or take it home in a form which makes later confiscation impracticable.

In Washington, officialdom, including many of the top-flight military men, is perfectly willing we should feed at least Europe's children. But it will not take the first step. Pressure alone will move it—pressure from ourselves or pressure from other nations. Turkey made us feed Greece . . . Might we not make ourselves feed French or Belgian or Dutch—or any other—children? A pure motive does not injure a good deed.

Practically: let people know you favor sending food to Europe's next generation—the generation our own children must live with. And the higher placed the people you let know, the more effective your effort will be.

Pearl Buck's Pessimism

DURING the second week in December, the Common Council for American Unity gave a Nobel Anniversary Dinner in New York. The idea was to gather together all the writers and scientists in this country who have won Nobel prizes. Of them all, Pearl Buck delivered far and away the most moving and significant speech. It was a profoundly pessimistic speech, and the daily press seems largely to have given it as little attention as possible.

One may not agree with Miss Buck, and yet what she says needs and deserves our attention. Her thesis amounts to this: that the war has degenerated into a military war, which must, indeed, be won, but which has lost the glory of being a war for freedom. "The heavy foreboding, which is upon the heart and mind of every thinking man and woman, is not lifted as it should be now, at the end of this incredible year. Why can we not take more comfort in today's news? It is comforting, yes, it is something to be grateful for that our military machine is better than the enemies' machine. Why, then, are we not comforted?" The answer is that we are no longer fighting for the liberation of all peoples, for the improvement of the economic lot of all peoples. The Asiatics "are realizing soberly that they must find their salvation in themselves, and not with us. Allies we are, to a certain guarded degree, for a moment, for a while, but they cannot trust us. . . . Our own colored people are not closer to us at the end of this year than they were at the beginning. Military victory is not enough to lift their hearts."

There is much more to the same effect in Miss Buck's speech, and it needed saying. No man of good will can deny the desirability of the ideals Miss Buck says we have betrayed. Sadly, men are always betraying them. This is, however, a cause for sorrow rather than forboding. Angelism must have its awakenings, and it is well that those who hoped to produce a world of bliss by one universal conflagration now realize that there are smaller tasks which need doing and which are better within the compass of our human nature.

Continue the Tolan Committee!

UNLESS a new and modest appropriation is made for the purpose at an early session of the new Congress which meets directly after the first of the year, the Tolan Congressional Committee is due to go out of existence. Not as highly publicized as the Dies Committee for examining foreign *isms*, or as Thurman Arnold's forays against the trusts, this group has to its credit the discovering and compiling of the most invaluable data of all. After bringing home unmistakably the evils characteristic of the widely prevalent American

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system of exploiting destitute migratory farm labor, the Tolan committee tackled the problem of directing the migration of defense workers so that it would not impede the growing national war effort in the summer of '41. After thorough first-hand investigation it issued that October a report on such key factors as housing, education, health and recreation in defense plant areas. It recommended as a result restriction of further migration through ending discrimination against hiring, training of local workers in the necessary skills, and greater cooperation with the United States Employment Service. It also called for the widest possible distribution of defense contracts and the maximum use of subcontracting.

Since then the committee has issued five additional reports on the immediately essential question of more efficient prosecution of the war. They have dealt with such topics as the conversion of normal industry to wartime use, regional decentralization of industry and the importance of utilizing to the full the nation's assets in smaller shops and factories, the evacuation of Japanese aliens, and the national manpower problem. Their recommendations have considerably furthered the successful prosecution of the war—at the moment the nation's basic need.

It is the angle from which the Tolan Committee approaches all these problems which cannot be emphasized often enough. Their primary interest is the well-being of the American family, the protection of the "little man," the human side of each of these national problems. Representative Tolan himself long knew poverty at first hand, for he is the eleventh son of an impoverished Minnesota farmer. At the various committee hearings in 25 different cities, not once was a witness subpoenaed or subjected to cross-examination. The testimony of more than 400 witnesses now compiled in 34 volumes is straight and uninduced. Such valuable first-hand evidence cannot be procured in any other way. In the periods of all-out war, and then general demobilization, that lie ahead, the country needs an instrument with the experience, zeal and vision of the Tolan Committee. It is one government agency we cannot afford to do without.

N. B.

DURING the current New York newspaper strike *PM* has obligingly been conducting a column, "What You Missed in Other Papers." These items in descending order are Comics, Columns and Headlines. To keep readers up to each day's instalments, *PM* summarizes such strips as Joe Palooka, Little Abner, Terry and the Pirates, Gasoline Alley, Dick Tracy, Blondie, Wash Tubbs and Superman. Second in importance are such columnists as Samuel Grafton, Dorothy Thompson, Raymond Clapper, William Philip Simms, Mrs. Roosevelt and (for jibes) George Sokolsky and Westbrook Pegler.

* * *

From a pre-strike paper: "Gustavus Myers . . . was buried today at Woodlawn Cemetery. Myers, who was 70, collapsed after completing his last book, 'History of Bigotry in the U.S.'"

* * *

Accolade to our contemporary, ***America,*** for having published in its December 19 issue a rather searching criticism of General Franco's recent speech and an even more impressive feature editorial on conditions in Puerto Rico and the unjust attacks on Governor Tugwell.

Into the Future

IT IS NOT EASY to send messages to the peoples of Europe, and it is a great mistake to suppose that we know exactly what we would like to say if we were able to speak to them directly. There are no letters going to France now, no letters to Germany, no letters to the concentration camps in Poland. There is no mail for the Greeks, no postman for the Dutch. We broadcast to Europe and there are people who hear us, but we do not know who are the people who hear us and who can reply only in a language of silent sacrifice. So that in speaking to Europe we are speaking to ourselves, in keeping faith with Europe we are keeping faith alive in ourselves—we are writing for the record, for the record in our hearts. We are writing so that we shall not forget the poplar bordered roads of France and the narrow stone stairways that are streets in Naples mounting to the Vomero, and all the landscapes everywhere in Europe which frame the life of men now separated from us and whom we can remember and hold in our minds and for whom we thus can hold ready our friendship against the moment when we may speak with them again. We turn through the family album of photographs It is all we can do, we who are here at home and not fighting. Here is Bach, here is my brother in a sailor suit, here are Baudelaire and President Lebrun, here is my wife aged six in gypsy dress, here is the angel of Amiens, here are Rimbaud, Danton, Charlemagne.

If there were no clocks, no measuring of time, we would still know that unbridgeable time has passed and that all of Europe has receded into the faded photographs of the past.

Europe is closed to us in the past, remote already, and all we can do is to keep the essential lines of the past engraved in our minds, the friendships of the past alive in our minds, and when we can speak again with the peoples of Europe there will be a past which is common to them and to us

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and some point at which we can say we will take up from here, it was at this point that we were separated and this is what happened to us and we do not know at all what happened to you but we have this past which we have been careful not to confuse with the present and which we have carried on into the present for fear it would be lost. The rivers, the hills, the hill towns, the towns in the valleys by the railroads, the roads, the mountains, the picture postcard of Mont Blanc, the names of the streets in the cities, the address of Cook's Agency, the phrase books, the guide books, the great books, the poems, the churches, the symphonies, the palaces, we have carried them all: the places, the men, the books, the music, we have carried the sounds, the languages, we have carried all that we could hold to from the past into the present. Because there are the dead, who are out of the world; the millions of children who will never be born, in Europe, and who can carry nothing at all.

It does not matter what revolutions occur. There is this past which will not have been lost, these memories which will serve.

We will hold to everything which has been elaborated throughout the centuries in the universities of Parma, Berlin, Warsaw, Athens, Prague, Brussels, Louvain, Paris, Lyons and Strasbourg.

It does not matter how long the separation endures—save for Europe's anguish, save for our own anguish—there is this past which we shall have held to, this unity of the past which we shall have preserved so that the peoples of Europe, and our own, may have a common starting point from which to advance into the future.

We will hold to everything that the Jews bore with them through their endless and grievous journey and to every experiment and to every hope and to every sacrifice accomplished by all the revolutions of Europe. We will hold to the Christian revolution which is Europe's history and our own, and the world's.

The unknown and troubled future does not matter, for we will enter it with the landscapes, the memories, the accumulated memories, the friendships, the faith, the memories of injustice, the memories of hope, with tenacious and fraternal charity—and with nothing lost, nothing mislaid.

C. G. PAULDING.

At The Manger

Extract from a Christmas oratorio.

By **W. H. Auden**

SECTION 1

Soprano solo

O shut your bright eyes that mine must endanger
With their watchfulness; protected by its shade
Escape from my care: what can you discover
From my tender look but how to be afraid?
Love can but confirm the more it would deny.
Close your bright eye.

Sleep. What have you learned from the womb
that bore you
But an anxiety your Father cannot feel?
Sleep. What will the flesh that I gave do
for you,
Or my mother love but tempt you from His will.
Why was I chosen to teach His Son to weep?
Little One, sleep.

Dream. In human dreams earth ascends to
Heaven
Where no one need pray nor ever feel alone.
In your first few hours of life here, O have you
Chosen already what death must be your own?
How soon will you start on the Sorrowful Way?
Dream while you may.

SECTION 2

2 Tenors, 2 Baritones, 2 Basses

MAGUS 1: Led by the light of an unusual star,
We hunted high and low.

MAGUS 2: Have traveled far,
For many days, a little group alone
With doubts, reproaches, boredom, the unknown.

MAGUS 3: Through stifling gorges.

MAGUS 1: Over level lakes,

MAGUS 2: Tundras intense and irresponsive seas.

MAGUS 3: In vacant crowds and humming silences

MAGUS 1: By ruined arches and past modern shops

MAGUS 2: Counting the miles,

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MAGUS 3: And the absurd mistakes.
TRIO: O here and now our endless journey stops.

SHEPHERD 1: We never left the place where we were born,
SHEPHERD 2: Have only lived one day but every day,
SHEPHERD 3: Have walked a thousand miles yet only worn
The grass between our work and home away.
SHEPHERD 1: Lonely we were though never left alone.
SHEPHERD 2: The solitude familiar to the poor
Is feeling that the family next door,
The way it talks, eats, dresses, loves, and hates,
Is indistinguishable from one's own.
SHEPHERD 3: Tonight for the first time the prison gates
Have opened.
SHEPHERD 1: Music and sudden light
SHEPHARD 2: Have interrupted our routine tonight
SHEPHERD 3: And swept the filth of habit from our hearts,
TRIO: O here and now our endless journey starts.

MAGI: Our arrogant longing to attain the tomb
SHEPHERDS: Our sullen wish to go back to the womb
MAGI: To have no past
SHEPHERDS: No future
MAGI AND SHEPHERDS: Is refused.
And yet without our knowledge Love has used
Our weakness as a guard and guide. We bless
MAGI: Our lives' impatience.
SHEPHERDS: Our lives' laziness.
MAGI AND SHEPHERDS: And bless each other's sin,
exchanging here
MAGI: Exceptional conceit
SHEPHERDS: With average fear.
MAGI AND SHEPHERDS: Released by Love from
isolating wrong,
Let us for Love unite our various song,
Each with his gift according to his kind
Bringing this child his body and his mind.

SECTION 3

Sextet

MAGI: Child, at whose birth we would do obsequy
For our tall errors of imagination,
Redeem our talents with your little cry.

SHEPHERDS: Clinging like sheep to the earth for
protection,
We have not ventured far in any direction:
Wean, Child, our aging flesh away
From its childish way.

MAGI: Love is more serious than Philosophy
Who sees no humor in her observation
That Truth is knowing that we know we lie.

SHEPHERDS: When to escape what our memories
are thinking
We go out at nights and stay up drinking,
Stay then with our sick pride and mind
The forgetful mind.

MAGI: Love does not will enraptured apathy;
Fate plays the passive rôle of dumb temptation
To wills where Love can doubt, affirm, deny.

SHEPHERDS: When chafing at the rule of old offenses
We run away to the sea of the senses,
On strange beds then O welcome home
Our horror of home.

MAGI: Love knows of no somatic tyranny;
For homes are built for Love's accommodation
By bodies from the void they occupy.

SHEPHERDS: When exhausting our wills with our evil
courses
We demand the good-will of cards and horses,
Be then our lucky certainty
Of uncertainty.

MAGI: Love does not fear substantial anarchy
But vividly expresses obligation
With movement and in spontaneity.

SHEPHERDS: When feeling the great boots of the rich
on our faces
We live in the hope of one day changing places,
Be then the truth of our abuse
That we abuse.

MAGI: The singular is not Love's enemy;
Love's possibilities of realization
Require an Otherness that can say "I."

SHEPHERDS: When in dreams the beasts and cripples of
resentment
Rampage and revel to our hearts' contentment,
Be then the poetry of hate
That replaces hate.

MAGI: Not In but With our time Love's energy
Exhibits Love's immediate operation;
The choice to love is open till we die.

SHEPHERDS: O Living Love, by your birth we are able
Not only like the ox and ass of the stable
To love with our live wills but love,
Knowing we love.

CHORUS: O Living Love replacing phantasy,
O Joy of life revealed in Love's creation;
Our mood of longing turns to indication:
Space is the Whom our loves are needed by,
Time is our choice of How to love and Why.

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War and Soviet Literature

A new tone in verse and prose.

By Helen Iswolsky

RUSSIAN resistance to Hitler has been and still is often interpreted as a proof of communist achievements. It is thanks, the public at large is told, to the efficiency of Stalin's system, "unanimously recognized by the Soviet people"; the Russian army and the Russian people have rallied around Stalin in order to defend their ideals, which are communist ideals.

Communist propaganda abroad has of course taken advantage of Russian resistance and Russian success; it lauds with renewed energy the Bolshevik régime for having performed the miracle of stemming Hitler's legions. And men who are not communists are easily impressed by this glamorous picture: they believe that it is the communist spirit which stimulates the Russian people and leads them on to victory.

This conviction provokes various reactions: the public is inclined either to justify communism in Russia in so far as it is proving efficient in the struggle against Hitler; or to regard Russian victories with suspicion and fear, because they mark the triumph of "Red Imperialism." It is useless to point out that both reactions are as unfortunate as they are detrimental, for they breed distrust and misunderstanding.

Hitler's agents make use of both tendencies: they suggest on one hand that the democratic countries are allied to communism. On the other hand, they encourage a whispering campaign hinting that "capitalist" England and America are secretly hostile to the Soviet Union's victory.

In order to dispel these misunderstandings, it is useful to turn to direct Soviet sources. Not to Bolshevik propaganda exported abroad, but to the manifestations of cultural life, of art, literature, music, which reflect the Soviet Union's present mood.

If we study these sources, it will become obvious that a great change has come over the USSR. No mention of communism as a system, doctrine or faith, is made in Russia today. It is the fatherland, and not communism, which is at stake. It is the national ideal which is defended against the invader. The love of Russian soil, of Russian cultural and historical traditions, is being continually exalted. Of Stalin's achievements, of the prestige and authority of the Party, we hear little or nothing. The entire machine of ideological dictatorship seems to have collapsed before a powerful surge of patriotic feeling.

The art front

An interesting feature of Russia's war against Hitler is what the Soviet author N. Tikhonov calls "the front of art." Indeed, artistic creation has not declined in spite of the terrible experience of war and invasion; it has, on the contrary gained a new impulse and has in some cases acquired a remarkable dynamism.

Shostakovitch wrote his Seventh Symphony in Leningrad, during the siege of that city, while he himself served as fire-warden in the Leningrad Academy of Music. The symphony can be truly said to be a direct reflection of Russia's national war. It is inspired by the war-cry of the guerrillas: "Russia has never knelt, and will never kneel before anyone."

Like the *Marseillaise,* Shostakovitch's work will remain as a symbol of a people's fighting spirit. Like Beethoven's Heroic Symphony, it is not only a remarkable artistic production, but echoes the voice of a historic epoch.

Shostakovitch recently wrote in the *Pravda* a review devoted to the performance of Glinka's opera "Ivan Sussanin" at Kuybishev. In pre-revolutionary days, the opera was called "The Life for the Tsar"; it is the story of the heroic death of the peasant Ivan Sussanin who saved the life of the young Tsar Michael Romanov (the first ruler of that dynasty) during the Polish invasion.

"Ivan Sussanin," writes Shostakovitch, "awakens new and moving thoughts and feelings. And the strongest feeling is that of wrath against our enemy of today—Hitler's Germany, and the conviction of our strength. The Fascist brigands wanted to destroy our culture. . . . We shall never forget Tchaikovsky's musical scores trampled under the invader's feet, nor the monstrous crimes committed at Yasnaïa Poliana. We shall avenge the Museum of Rimsky Korsakov at Tikvin, and the Tchernetchia Hill near Kanev, where Tarass Shevtchenko was buried. . . . Just as our great Soviet people, so our art will never kneel before anyone. . . . Ivan Sussanin, inspired by the noblest ideals of the Russian people, has lost nothing of its freshness. For our people will preserve forever

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the noble, exalted feelings expressed by Glinka's incomparable genius—the love of the fatherland, the hatred of the enemy."

This excerpt is worth quoting, because it gives the keynote of the "feelings and thoughts" which inspire the Soviet intelligentsia. Most Russian artists, painters, musicians, writers and poets have been mobilized; many of them are in active service in the firing lines or in besieged cities. There have been casualties among them: Afinoguenov, the gifted playwright was killed during a raid in Moscow, and Evgueny Petrov, a talented and extremely popular novelist, fell at Sevastopol. A number of prominent authors, like the novelist Tikhonov and the poet Surkov, are war correspondents, working at the front or in heavily raided towns. The Soviet press daily publishes their accounts, as well as war-poems, short stories and sketches. Some of them are excellent pieces of literary production, and all present great interest as vivid human documents.

I have already pointed out that none of these works so much as mentions Marxism, the "struggle of the proletariat against capitalism," the Communist Party and other standard slogans, current in Soviet literature before the war. This is probably due to the fact that the Soviet reader has lost all interest in official ideology. What it wants is a national, patriotic literature and the direct experience of the men at the front.

Here are for instance a few lines of one of the most popular poems written during the war. This poem, entitled "A Letter of a Red Army Soldier to His Friend," was composed by Constantine Simonov, quite a prominent Soviet playwright and poet:

Do you remember, friend, the road to Smolensk,
Under the endless, cruel rains,
And the women who brought us jugs of milk,
Pressed to their faded breasts?

Do you remember how they brushed away their tears,
And whispered: "God help you!"
Just as did the soldiers' wives
In the old days of great Russia?

You know friend, I understood that the fatherland
Is not the house in the city I lived in,
But these roads where our fathers marched before us,
And the humble crosses of Russian graves.

And the poet goes on to say, that though his life has been spared, he knows that he may soon die. And yet:

I am proud of the dear homeland,
The Russian land where I was born,
I am proud to have to fight for it,
Proud of the Russian mother who bore me,
And of the Russian woman who thrice embraced me,
As I left for the battle field.

Simonov tells us in his poem that war has for the first time brought him face to face with village life. This, no doubt, is very typical of the new Soviet intelligentsia. Just as with the former Russian writers, who "went to the people," this direct contact with the masses has been a refreshing experience. The Soviet writer and war correspondent has acquired a new faith in peasant Russia, the feeling that the great mystery and strength of his country is hidden away in these villages among these "humble crosses."

This war has thus truly become a people's war, like the war of 1812 against Napoleon, when crack regiments and peasant guerrillas fought side by side, and Pierre Bezukhov discovered Platon Karataiev.

The cities

But if the rôle of the village is essential in Russia's war against Hitler, the cities have also their share in these tragic epics: Leningrad, Sevastopol, Odessa, Smolensk, Rostov and other towns have stood the terrible nazi onslaught. Moscow has revived the memories of Napoleon's aggression, and if Russia's ancient capital was spared this time, Borodino has once more seen the invader; the enemy has passed near the monument erected on the famous battlefield of 1812:

The road leads Westward,
If you leave it, you shall behold nearby,
The strict, tall obelisk,
And the eagle with both its wings outspread.
The sacred, austere landmark!
The sunset glows. Nature is silent.
I hail thee, famous field,
The love and glory of the Russian people!

Thus writes Serguei Vassiliev in his poem "Moscow." And he adds:

Oh, if the ancestors could see,
Through the tomb's eternal darkness,
How zealously their honor is defended
By their children worthy of immortality!

A great number of war correspondences are naturally devoted to Stalingrad. Simonov has given a vivid description of the havoc wrought by the Germans, of the inflexible will and infinite devotion and self-sacrifice of the population. In the plants, the workers hurriedly repaired the damaged tanks, which immediately returned into action. The inhabitants joined the regular troops, fighting at their side, bringing ammunitions and tending the wounded:

"The entire Stalingrad region has been turned into a battlefield. There are no more peaceful inhabitants—only defenders." And Simonov concludes: "After Stalingrad, we shall be pitiless."

The siege of Stalingrad is the most spectacular, the most dramatic, with its smouldering ruins, its battered blocks, each representing a beleaguered fortress, its innumerable fires, which set

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the sky aglow. But perhaps, the most heroic of all cities is Leningrad, Russia's former capital.

Leningrad has suffered an ordeal which has lasted more than a year. Hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants have died of hunger and cold during the tragic winter of 1941-42—perhaps over a million, according to the New York *Herald Tribune* correspondent, Walter Kerr. German air-raids have blasted the city. Enormous quantities of food have been destroyed. The population has been severely rationed and is so exhausted that during that bitter winter, people walking in the street had to pause for breath.

And yet, as the writer N. Tikhonov relates, the city is living an intense cultural life. Thus, for instance, the students of the Art Academy have pursued their work, in spite of repeated bombardments. The building itself, which is a fine piece of eighteenth century architecture, has been badly battered and all the windows have been shattered. The students live and work in air-raid shelters. Last spring, there were quite a number of graduates, among them a brilliant young architect. When his best friend was killed at the front, he immediately enlisted in defense work, and is now building fortifications.

Leningrad has its great musician, Shostakovitch, and its poet, Margarita Aliger. In her poem "Spring" she has admirably rendered the tragic city's atmosphere:

> Leningrad, Leningrad, Leningrad!
> Glory to your hard bread,
> To the silence of your blind immensities,
> To the breath of your steep barricades,
> And the will of your stubborn hearts!

Like Moscow, Leningrad is full of historical memories. It is the city of Peter the Great, the builder of the Russian Empire. Its palaces and churches, its granite quays, the wide, majestically flowing Neva, have always stimulated the imagination of Russian writers and poets. Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoievsky and in more recent years Alexander Block and Andreï Bely are closely linked to the capital of the last Russian emperors. In those days it shone in all its splendor. Today, it is a city of "hard bread" and "steep barricades." But its inhabitants have learned to love it with a new love. Every stone, every monument, speaks to them of the great culture they are defending, of a historical past, whose spectre has been revived and which no Germans bombs can destroy.

History and Tradition

The more we study present-day Soviet writings, the more we feel that this war has not only provoked admirable feats of heroism and stirred the fighting spirit of the Russian people. It has also taught this people to cherish their country, its history, its traditions, its soldiers and heroes of long ago. The acts of vandalism performed by the Germans have caused nation-wide indignation. One may truly say that Hitler, who wanted to conquer Russia, has restored Russia to the Russians. No doctrine of internationalism, no slogans of "class-struggle" can any longer appeal to a people who have experienced such a deep revival of national, patriotic emotions, who have been reborn in the fire of war and aggression.

It is extremely characteristic, for instance, that the Soviet poet Alexeï Surkov, who at the Congress of Soviet Writers held in 1934 appeared as the champion of "class-hatred," has today given up these obsolete shibboleths, and has entirely devoted himself to patriotic themes. We may add that his patriotic poems are far superior to his "class-war" appeals. He has written some very fine verses. Already during the Finland campaign, Surkov was in the fighting lines. In his "December Journal" he wrote at that time:

> The highest of all civil rights,
> Is to meet the wind of battle in the name of life,
> And if needed, conquering death by death,
> To gain through fire a hero's immortality.

But we also find in Surkov's works more intimate moods and emotions. In his poem "Love," he describes his solitary vigil somewhere at the front in a snow-storm, and calls out to his beloved.

> You are far, far away,
> Snow and wind divide us,
> It is difficult to reach you,
> But to reach death—there are only four steps.

Correspondents

Soviet writers and correspondents scattered along the immense Russian front are learning to know their country, to value its immense natural riches, which they are now defending against Hitler's greed. Everywhere they recognize the landmarks of Russian culture. Thus, for instance, speaking of the Caucasus, threatened by the nazis, Wladimir Lidin writes:

> The Caucasus is our love, the inspirer of our songs. Here our great poetry drank at the clear mountain streams, and Pushkin listened to the enchanting murmur of the Aragwa. Lermontov's deep lyrics were born in the eternal snows of the Kasbek, and the great reader of the human soul, Leo Tolstoy, harkened to the noble heart of the mountain tribes.

Is not this remarkable revival of national feeling, this new devotion felt by the Russian intelligentsia for their country's cultural and spiritual treasures, the great miracle worked by Hitler? No doubt when the Führer started his "Anti-Bolshevik crusade," he little dreamed that he was going to stir these powerful national emotions. Had he foreseen that he would turn against himself the Russian people's spiritual dynamism, he would have no doubt never dared to invade Russia.

Hitler has occupied immense areas of Russian

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territory. He has enslaved a population of fifty million; he has destroyed and burnt down hundreds of towns and villages, and shot thousands of innocent men and women. But he has not deprived the Russian people of their fatherland. On the contrary, he has bestowed upon this word a new meaning. Bolshevism taught that there was no fatherland, but only an international proletarian union, a "drillground" for future communist experiments. Today the people in their struggle against Hitler have grasped the essential truth that Russia *is their home.*

This is what the Soviet poet, A. Tvardovsky, has sought to convey in his moving poem:

> Wherever you are, in the fire of the front lines,
> In the north or somewhere in Crimea,
> Near Smolensk, or here, in the Ukraine,
> You are now on your way home.

The Blue-Eyed Lady

By **Ferenc Molnar***

TWO LITTLE children lived in a small flat in one of those big old houses. They had neither father nor mother. The younger one was called Pip; his older sister's name was Nanny. A very kind-hearted, poor old woman, Mrs. Finn—the children called her Auntie Finn—brought them up. She washed them clean, dressed them neatly, and fed them well. And every morning after they had eaten their hot breakfast, she took them, one in each hand, and led them to their nearby school. Auntie Finn had a tiny wart right on the tip of her nose, and on the top of her head perched a tiny little hat, and on the top of the hat a tiny green feather.

Old Mrs. Finn talked a great deal to Nan and Pip about their mother, who, she told them, was now in heaven. Their little mother, she said, had been a very beautiful blue-eyed young woman, and she had never done anything that was not kind and gentle. Good Mrs. Finn had loved her dearly. That is why she brought up the children with such tender care.

Nan and Pip sat quite still and were very happy when Auntie Finn talked to them about their mother, especially when she told them how much the little mother had loved them. How she had taught them to walk and to speak. How she had nursed them when they were sick. What lovely little pink woolly jackets she used to knit for them. How they did adore hearing about all that! They were always begging:

"Please, Auntie Finn, tell us more about our mother!"

The two little orphans loved their mother very much, even though they couldn't remember how she looked. For they were very small when, one day, their mother grew sick and went to heaven where, Auntie Finn said, she was well again.

This is the strange story of what happened to Pip and Nan on one day in the month of December, just before Christmas, when in the city splendid, rich windows glisten and sparkle with a thousand lights, even in the early morning.

One day when Auntie Finn was taking the children to school as usual, she stopped in front of several gay shop-windows all trimmed up for Christmas. Even though Auntie Finn was old and poor, she still loved to admire the gorgeous dresses and soft furs made for rich and beautiful women. In one window stood several wax figures dressed in dazzling party gowns.

Mrs. Finn came to such a sudden stop that she almost lost her tiny little green-feathered hat. Her jaw dropped. She clasped her hands together. She pointed to one of the figures and cried:

"Goodness me! What am I seeing? . . . What a perfect likeness! . . . Look at her, children, look at her! Your mother looked exactly like that . . . exactly! Same face . . . same hair! And the same beautiful blue eyes!"

Pip and Nan pressed their small noses against the cold glass windows and, open-mouthed, stared at the wax lady.

"Oh, she's lovely! Isn't she lovely!" they exclaimed and clapped their hands in glee.

The lady was dressed in a pink lace gown trimmed with pink and gold flowers. She sat gracefully on a silken settee, its legs slim and golden. She looked past the other wax figures. These ladies in the windows never do pay any attention to one another. They're a strange lot. Some of them look haughtily up in the air as if they were waiting for someone to arrive in an airplane. Others simply glare over the heads of the passers-by straight out through the window. Just so did the pink-gowned lady. With an unmoved, serene expression on her face, she sat there looking through the window out upon the street. Her head was made of wax; her wonderful glass eyes were deep blue; her eyelashes long and dark. The heels of her tiny pink satin slippers were made of gold. She held her head quite rigid and looked into the street.

Old Mrs. Finn was so shaken by surprise she could scarcely get hold of herself. She shook her head so vigorously that the little green feather on the top of her hat trembled. And again she said:

"Look at her, children, look at her hard! The resemblance to your mother is certainly astounding! I knew her well! She too had the same serene expression on her face . . . so serious! The same dear little nose . . . the same lovely little mouth . . . and just the same violet-blue eyes! What a coincidence! Never in my life have I seen the like of that . . . never! . . ."

The two little children were wild with joy that at last they had a chance to see how their mother looked. They were proud that she was so beautiful and wore such a magnificent dress. With happy eyes they looked up at the wax lady. But she paid no attention to anyone. Still,

*This story is available as a children's book, published a few days ago by the Viking Press, and illustrated in full color by Helen Sewell. ($2.00.)

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serene, head held high, she kept right on looking up over the street out of those blue glass eyes.

* * *

Mrs. Finn drew a deep sigh, turned, and went on her way with the two little children. The children were sorry to leave; they wanted to gaze longer at the blue-eyed lady, so much like their little mother. After they had gone on a few steps, they turned their heads to have one more look at the lovely lady in the shop window.

And then it was that the first miraculous thing happened. Pip and Nan were astonished to see that the wax lady who had been so motionless and calm now began to move very slowly. She bent forward a little bit, turned her head in their direction, and looked at them . . . looked at them out of her big, beautiful blue eyes. And slowly she began to smile at them sweetly.

Nan clutched at Auntie Finn's skirts. Frightened, she cried out:

"Auntie Finn! See, see there! The wax lady is looking at us! She's smiling . . . see, she's smiling at us!"

And Pip, surprised, shouted:

"That's right . . . she is smiling! Honest she is, Auntie Finn."

Old Mrs. Finn turned back to the wax lady and said rather shortly:

"My, my, you little simpletons! You're only imagining things. However could she smile at you when she's made of wax and wood!"

Now, Mrs. Finn was a very wise woman but this time she was mistaken.

All day long Nan and Pip were restless and fidgety. Auntie Finn talked and talked, but all her talking was in vain. They had seen it clearly; yes, indeed, they had seen the lovely lady turn her head toward them and smile at them very sweetly. Even at night as they lay in their common bed, they whispered for a long time to each other in the dark. They were whispering about the blue-eyed lady who looked so much like their little mother and who smiled at them more sweetly than ever anyone else in the world.

All the next day too, their little heads together, they kept on whispering to each other. Finally, in order that Auntie Finn might not know it, they slipped off secretly to the big shop window.

Meanwhile, the blue-eyed lady's dress had been changed. Today she was wearing a different one. Shimmering sky-blue chiffon it was, glowing with silver trimmings. Small blue diamonds flashed in her hair, and silver slippers twinkled on her dainty feet. And she was looking up in the air, serious-faced, just as yesterday. The children stood silent and stared at her for a long, long time. They had come to love the beautiful lady and they longed to stand there and look at her until darkness came.

Gay shoppers hurried by, and some stopped for a second in front of the window. One of the ladies, seeing the children, asked:

"Why are you standing there so long in front of that window on such a cold day, children? Do you like the lady in the silver dress as much as that?"

"Yes," Nan answered, "we do. We love her because she looks so much like our mother."

"Does she? Where is your mother?" the gentle stranger asked.

"In heaven," answered Nan.

Up above the clouds, in heaven, their little mother heard that answer. Little mothers in heaven always listen when they hear their children talking about them. Like all mothers when they come to heaven, she too had golden wings, for there all mothers become angels.

She flew to the edge of a big fleecy cloud, and from a great height gazed down on the city below. In a second she could see her dear children standing in front of the shop-window, and the blue-eyed lady, too, at whom they were staring with wide-open eyes. The mother was so happy that from sheer joy she cried and she laughed at the same time. She was glad that the children loved her so much. From the edge of the big white cloud her clear voice called down to the city below:

"Thank you, thank you, dear wax lady, because you look so much like me!"

Hearing this, many other golden-winged angels gathered about her. Proudly, the little mother said to them:

"Come here! See! See! There between the two clouds you have a fine view down into the city! Do you see those two tiny children in front of the window? See?"

"Yes, we see them," the angels said, leaning over the cloud.

Half laughing, half crying, the mother went on:

"They are mine, my little Pip and Nanny. . . . They have been standing there in the great cold for a long time. . . . They are staring at the wax figure because she looks like me. . . . Oh, my good little children . . . my dear little children . . . I only hope they won't catch cold!"

That happened up in heaven.

Down in the city, the children could feel their feet beginning to freeze. Shivering, they started for home. After they had gone a few steps, Nanny said to Pip:

"Let's look back, shall we? Surely she'll smile again!"

Shyly, hopefully, they looked around.

They weren't disappointed. Again the blue-eyed lady bent slightly forward; again she turned her head toward them; again she smiled at them sweetly. But this time her smile seemed to be a little sadder than it was yesterday, as if she was pleading:

"Don't go yet . . . stay just a little longer."

The children were just a bit frightened. It was queer, very queer, that the lovely, serious-eyed wax lady had moved again, had smiled at them when they left. Even though Pip and Nanny were small, they knew that those tall dolls were made of wax and wood, and their eyes of glass, just like little play-dolls. How did it happen, then, that this blue-eyed lady was able to move, to turn her eyes and smile at them?

It was beginning to get dark. Great snowflakes covered the city. The children had tears in their eyes. They didn't know why. . . . It wasn't because they felt sad . . . no, not a bit. Their hearts were beating with wonder and love.

With frozen noses, on they trudged down the long, icy street to Auntie Finn and their cozy home. Once there, eating their soup beside the hearth in Auntie Finn's warm kitchen, they quieted down.

Nanny leaned over to Pip and whispered:

"I'm not frightened now. I'm very happy. She smiles at us because she loves us."

"I wonder why she loves us, Nan?" Pip asked.

"She loves us," answered Nan promptly, "because she looks like our little mother."

Still not a word to Auntie Finn did they say about the

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whole matter. Why should they? She wouldn't have believed them if they had. She might even have teased them . . . just a little.

* * *

In the evening, snug in their common bed, they pulled the bed-clothes 'way up over their heads. There, hidden under the blanket, they whispered to each other for a long time. And before they finally dropped off to sleep, they had made up their minds to pay another visit to the blue-eyed lady in the shop-window.

Again they stood in front of the huge window. The lady had another dress on now. Each day she became more beautiful. Wearing a soft sea-green gown, there she sat just as before, on her silken settee. Emerald buckles glittered on her green velvet slippers. Among all the other figures "Little Mother" was the most beautiful. Hand in hand, the children stood for a long time just quietly looking at her.

But as they left and turned back to her—they always did that now—once again a very strange thing happened.

Not that they could hear anything through the glass window . . . they couldn't. But they could see clearly, they could see very clearly by the lady's red lips that she was whispering something to them. Surely she was saying that they mustn't go away . . . they mustn't leave her yet. They could tell by the look in her eyes that she was begging them not to go.

But they had to get home before it was too dark. As they skipped along, they laughed for joy, and Nanny said:

"What a pity we have to go home and leave the sweet lady now! Just now, when she was beginning to speak to us!"

Auntie Finn of course wouldn't have believed that either. So they kept mum about this too—oh, most of all about this!

The day before Christmas came. All day long nothing was to be seen of Nan and Pip. They hid themselves in a dark corner of the little flat and there busied themselves about some handiwork. This year, as they always did, they were making their Christmas presents for Auntie Finn. That has to be done in great secrecy, for aren't Christmas presents supposed to be surprises? Nobody knew that better than Auntie Finn did. So, busying herself about her own housework, she knew nothing about what they were doing there in the corner.

But this year it wasn't only something for their Auntie they were planning. Each was making another gift. And this other one was to be the most beautiful they had ever made, because it was to be for the blue-eyed lady. Nanny decided that she would do a piece of needlework, so she crocheted a flower out of thick blue and yellow wool, so large that you could place a drinking-glass on it. Pip somehow got hold of an old cigar-box. With a pair of scissors he cut stars out of some silver paper Nanny had saved from the year before, and he pasted them in neat rows over the box. The stars shone so brightly that the children danced with glee when they looked at it.

On Christmas Eve, the city lay buried under a heavy blanket of snow. White sheets covered the roofs of all the cars. The wind blew fiercely up and down the city and whistled around the street corners. Snow whipped the faces of the Christmas shoppers as they hurried along, and everywhere one heard the word "Blizzard!"

In and out among the crowd, two small children tried to fight their way against the storm. The blizzard almost whirled them off their feet. But they kept on bravely. On they plodded, plodded, straight toward the big shop, where in the window was still seated . . . today too . . . the sweetest lady in the whole world.

Pip and Nan entered the big shop. Their faces were stiff with cold, they could hardly catch their breath. They shook the snow off their jackets and off the precious packages they had brought with them—the starry box and the yellow and blue wool flower, wrapped in newspapers.

Hundreds of excited customers were dashing up and down in the crowded shop. Nanny took little Pip by the hand and together they worked their way through the crowds. Nobody took the least notice of them; they were all thinking of their own presents—jostling this way and that, talking loudly, crushing one another. They almost ran down Nan and little Pip. But Nan held on to her little brother as tightly as she could.

Finally a kindly gentleman, one of the clerks, saw them and asked, pleasantly:

"What are you two little folks doing in this crowd?"

Nanny answered shyly:

"We've brought some presents."

"Some presents? To whom?"

"To the blue-eyed lady sitting in the window."

The kind gentleman looked at them with a smile and then asked:

"To that wax figure?"

"Yes, sir," Pip said.

"Why are you bringing presents to her "

"Because we love her very much. May we give them to her?"

And Nan pointed to the window ablaze with the lights of hundreds of colored bulbs and where, among the other figures, sat their beloved blue-eyed lady. Never before had she been so beautiful as today. She wore a dress of rippling gold, a gold flower on her breast, a band of gold on her hair, and golden slippers on her feet. She sat looking seriously out upon the street, her eyes bluer than ever.

Nanny turned to the clerk and asked:

"May we go to her, please, up into the window?"

"Of course," he agreed, good-naturedly, and he lifted the children up into the window right in the midst of the wax figures.

"Merry Christmas," murmured Nan, bending to the lady's ear.

And into her other ear Pip whispered:

"Merry Christmas!"

Then brother and sister gently laid their presents at the lady's golden feet.

With questioning faces, they looked into her blue eyes and wondered whether she was going to stir, to smile, to thank them for their gifts. Trembling with expectation, they stood quite still . . . eager . . . waiting . . . hoping . . .

But the lovely lady did not move.

* * *

While all this was happening down in the city, up above the city, high above, on the edge of a big cloud, the golden-winged angels were admiring the city that sparkled with its millions of lights, and its dazzling letters of fire. Among them stood the little mother. She wasn't watching the red fire-letters, but two tiny specks hurrying in the snowstorm down the long street to the shop—her two children, two moving little specks in the big whiteness of the snow. The little mother was worried.

"My poor, poor children, out in such a storm! Why

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are they hurrying? Where can they be going? Why didn't they stay in their nice warm home?" she said.

The other angels too began to look worried at the two small specks—Pip and Nanny. They watched the children go into the shop, watched them place the presents in front of the wax lady's feet.

When she saw that, the little mother, out of her great joy, burst into tears, for she knew that the presents were meant for her. Weeping, she said to the other angels:

"See! See, my children have brought presents for me. In such a storm! Oh, the darling little things!"

Gently, one angel asked:

"Why do you cry, Sister?"

"Because I am so happy," answered the little mother.

The whole glittering golden crowd of angels hurried to the edge of the cloud, and looked down at the city. They wanted to see Pip and Nanny in the window.

The little mother suddenly began to smile through her tears.

"The other day they were so happy," she said, "when the wax lady smiled at them, and still more so when she whispered to them."

She smiled more and more broadly, her eyes filled with happy tears.

"Oh, I wish Pip and Nan could see these tears of their mother's," she said.

Then she looked down, eagerly, at the city below, waiting to see what was going to happen now.

She saw Pip and Nanny still standing side by side in the show-window. The lights glinted on their childish blond heads. There they stood watching the blue-eyed lady, waiting for her answer to their presents. Waiting . . . waiting . . .

All of a sudden Pip seized Nanny's hand in surprise.

"See! . . . Look! She has tears in her eyes."

They stared at the lady. Two tears glistened in her beautiful blue glass eyes. But she wasn't sad; those two tears were there because she was so happy. Pip repeated:

"Don't you see now? The lady is crying!"

"It's not the lady who's crying, Pip; I think we're the ones who are crying," Nanny said.

To be sure, they both wiped their eyes very dry.

Surprised, Nan whispered:

"You're right, Pip. It's the lady."

And now they noticed too that the lady was no longer staring out into the air, but was looking straight down at them. And the tear drops in her two eyes sparkled like two small diamonds.

Nanny's little heart tightened.

"Don't cry; please don't cry," she whispered tenderly to the beautiful lady.

Outside on the lighted streets snowflakes still whirled down through the air. Christmas Eve! Men, women, and children, loaded down with bundles, stumbled from one shop into the next, from one street to another. They were light-hearted, boisterous, cheerful . . .

"It's late," Nan went on. "It's getting dark. Please do excuse us. But we must go back home now."

And she added:

"God bless you, dearest. . . . Good-by."

When the little mother up in heaven heard Nanny's good-by, frightened she seized the arm of the angel standing next to her.

"Oh, look! . . . In a moment my childen down below will be leaving the shop-window! I would so much love to do something for them that would bring them great joy. But what? What?"

The angel said very simply:

"But you've just done that. Wasn't it enough that they were allowed to see their mother's happy tears?"

"Not enough! No, not enough!" the little mother cried. "They are small, they don't understand yet what that means! They deserve to have something more!"

The angel smiled:

"What would you give them now?"

"For each of them a kiss," the little mother answered with a sad little smile.

Down in the shop-window, Nanny repeated the farewell quietly:

"God bless you, dearest."

And, "God bless you, dearest," said little Pip, and he made a deep bow.

They were just turning to leave, when all of a sudden they noticed the lady began to stir . . . very slowly. She moved, stooped over a little toward them, and gently kissed them. First Nanny, then Pip. Marvelous, how warm and velvety was the touch of her wax face now! And she looked at them and smiled an adoring little smile.

Then, after a moment or two, she moved slowly, quietly, back into her place again, and sat upright just as before. And again she looked out into the air as if nothing at all had happened.

Up in heaven the happy little mother watched all this, hardly daring to breathe.

* * *

Down in the shop, the nice, kindly clerk said to another nice, kindly clerk:

"Looks as though we've got to send that blue-eyed model out to be repaired. Something seems to be wrong inside 'er. The other day it was her head that got loose, and today she stooped over a little. . . . Something's the matter with the spring in her back."

Pip, Nancy, and the blue-eyed lady just smiled at one another. They knew that wasn't the reason. Their hearts were filled with love and joy. Yes, those were very happy hearts—Pip's and Nanny's and—will you believe it—the wax lady's too. And certainly another one's up there above the high clouds.

The first thing the children did the next morning was to scamper off to the shop-window. They arrived, but the blue-eyed lady was not to be seen—she had been carried off to the repair shop.

For many and many a night after, lying in the dark in their little bed and hidden under the common blanket, the children talked in whispers about the strange thing that had happened to them. And they smiled as they remembered. But they never, never told old Mrs. Finn how sweet the lady had been to them on Christmas Eve; for Mrs. Finn wouldn't have believed them anyhow. She would only have shaken her head with the little hat on it, and on the hat the tiny green feather. And she would have said that the whole thing was nonsense because the blue-eyed lady was nothing but wood and wax, wasn't she? That is what Auntie Finn would have said because she didn't know that even wooden ladies can move and smile and cry and kiss when a mother in heaven wants to give great joy to her little children.

So, this miraculous happening remained their secret; the secret of the blue-eyed lady, of Pip and Nanny, and their lovely, golden-winged little mother.

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Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IN THE months that have passed since this column commented on the establishment, in New York, of the American center of Information Pro Deo, the International center of which is now at Lisbon, Portugal, the value of the work of this highly specialized Catholic organization has most perceptibly increased. Its bulletins, under the general title of "International Correspondence," have steadily become more closely and practically linked up with those subjects which without ceasing to be international in their fundamental character at the same time are primarily interesting to American readers, and closely concerned with American aspects of the problems discussed. Alongside of this steady development, it is also evident that the influence of the bulletins has kept pace with their progressive improvement, for in many important quarters in our press the information and the ideas placed in circulation by this agency have been readily and gratifyingly discernible to those aware of their source. How far their influence has penetrated beyond the press, among individuals and organized groups reached by the bulletins, is less open to observation, but it is probably not unduly optimistic to believe that in this direction as well as in the press it has been considerable, and will grow.

While the American character of the American center of this international Catholic effort to supply "an interpretative news service for the clarification of spiritual issues" is already sturdily established, and may be expected to develop just as sturdily, the fact remains that it was in Europe that the original idea of the Pro Deo organization sprang up, in response to the great needs of the European situation, and also its technical methods, and the fructifying experiences of its founders. That the work possesses a martyrology of its own—a list of leaders dying or still suffering in Nazi concentration camps, proves, if proof were needed, the unfaltering sincerity and devotion to truth which seal the work with a stamp unique among our modern Catholic press organizations and movements. Now, some of the highly experienced European members of the movement are connected with the American branch, and for this reason, among other considerations, the evaluation of the fundamental principles of our American tradition, given in the current bulletin, is of exceptional interest and importance.

It is also highly enheartening. Many American Catholics, I feel sure, whose lot it has been to spend a goodly portion of their time in Europe before the war and who were able to mingle with European Catholics on more than the superficial, and usually most agreeable, terms of a vacation or tourist or pilgrimage trip, must remember, as the present writer well remembers, the rather low opinion, generally speaking, held of American culture and religion, including its Catholicism, by many if not most of their candid European friends. Passing by, for lack of space, any effort to supply a catalogue of the many points criticized, it may be said, in summary, that in Europe there was a fairly firm, and apparently fixed, opinion that our American Catholicism, like our culture and tradition in general, was grandiose and materially successful, but lacked strong roots, and was shallow and superficial. "Where are your American saints, and great doctors, or writers, or artists, or lay leaders showing any signs of genuine strength and creative influence, either in strictly Church life, or in American life at large?" Such would be the compound question, that includes many of the points raised by European friends—to say nothing of far more sweeping criticisms and generalizations indulged in by unfriendly persons, and enemies both of the Church and of the United States. The latter body of criticism has been most strikingly expounded, and shaped into mortal weapons, of late, by our nazi and fascist foes.

In the really profound, though short and simplified study of our American tradition, supplied by the Pro Deo bulletin, there have been distilled the acute and exceptionally competent powers of observation and stores of authentic information possessed by European Catholics, both priests and lay folk, now in temporary exile on our shores, as well as knowledge stemming from purely American sources. And here a far juster view of America finds expression. Let me believe, as well as hope, that it corresponds far more to reality than the views expressed, usually not from close observation, by so many European Catholics in days gone by. Space is lacking to say more concerning the study, and anyhow I write more for the purpose of again urging extension of the American work of Pro Deo, and of helping to find support for it, than merely to thresh over the great subject dealt with in this bulletin.

Present Addresses

This Christmas, Editor, now Private Philip Burnham, having completed his Aviation Mechanics Course with highest honors, is stationed at Gore Field, Great Falls, Montana, with the 385th Squadron of the 7th Ferrying Group. Private Joseph Calderon who for several years served on the staff as a book reviewer has been in the South Seas for many months, where, we do not know, but he may be addressed Hq.Det. Force 0051, A.P.O. 930, care of Postmaster, San Francisco, California. Private David Burnham, who only recently left his post of COMMONWEAL *Drama Critic to join the Armed Forces, is in Battery B, 9th Battalion, 3rd Regiment, F.A.R.C., Fort Bragg, North Carolina.*

Cologne Epiphany: 1943

If our (we Magi's) skulls here shrined
Had eyes to seek a certain star,
A blinding skyful would they find,
The deadly Pleiades of war.

Herod still trails the Infant Jew
Who shakes the mighty with the plot
Of brotherhood; poor Rachel, too,
Weeps for her children that are not.

FRAY ANGELICO CHAVEZ.

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The Stage & Screen

The Willow and I

JOHN PATRICK'S "The Willow and I" investigates the secret causes and purposes of mental breakdown. Two sisters love one man. The older and weaker (Martha Scott) wins him; the younger sister (Barbara O'Neill), accustomed to success whenever she competed with the older, determines on suicide. A trivial accident brings the bride-to-be upon the suicidal scene. An ambiguous struggle ensues during which a revolver is discharged and the expectant bride loses her reason. Why? What effect does her tragic responsibility have on the future life of the younger sister, who later marries and has a son by the man in question. What good is there in it? What criminal tendency in the older sister—ostensibly pure, kind, reverent and tolerant—prepared her for the disastrous spiritual outcome of a struggle seemingly so unsuited to cause a major breakdown?

Mr. Patrick tries his hand at reaching the ulterior design of tragedy by the method of psychoanalysis. Sensitive as a dramatist to the lifelessness of such method unaided by a faith, he provides the faith in symbolic form in a touching final scene. He shows also a fine perceptiveness in revealing the erosion of profound feeling by the processes of time.

An unearthly quality, a delicate beauty of appearance, gesture and voice give charm to Martha Scott, who captivates the audience. No less impressive, however, are the performances of Barbara O'Neil, Cora Witherspoon, Edward Pawley and Gregory Peck. Mr. Peck, a comparative newcomer, has about him a suggestion of Gary Cooper.

The setting is excellent—in other words it comes from the hand of Lemuel Ayers. *(At the Windsor.)*

JAMES N. VAUGHAN.

Sherman Said

SINCE the beginning of motion pictures, there have been many cinema treatments of war. This week's films illustrate four widely different approaches.

If you have tears, prepare to shed them over *Journey for Margaret*. It is a minor "Mrs. Miniver," and its subject matter is one about which we have all been softly sentimental through the ages—children. David Hertz and William Ludwig, who wrote their screenplay from the book by William L. White, and W. S. Van Dyke, who directed, had one thought in mind, to stir up your emotions to make you hate war. And stir them up the film does. It starts in a breezy positive manner when the young American couple arrive in blitzed London in 1941. John (Robert Young) is a foreign correspondent who thinks the world is falling apart, but somehow he doesn't get mad the way he used to and his writing is growing stale. His wife Nora (Laraine Day) refuses to run away from life; she is pregnant and is going to have her baby in England. They are gay; they are used to being on the go. In fact "home is where Nora winds that clock." Comes an air raid. Nora is hurt; she will never be a mother. "They've killed all our babies." Convalescent, brave Nora and John go on a forgetting and drinking binge; but it doesn't work. Nora returns to the States to collapse. But John finds himself surrounded by a new interest when he is assigned to do a story on Trudy Strauss (Fay Bainter) and her home for family-less children. John's heart (and yours) cries out for these youngsters who have lost all links with the past. And two in particular get John in their clutches: Margaret, who wants to cry but can't and who refuses to give up the bomb shell she carries, and Peter, a darling little fellow who hugs a wooly lamb. John and the children become a unit, and it looks as if he can restore their shocked minds to normalcy. He decides to take them to the States. Then comes the awful moment. The plane to Lisbon is full. He can take one child instead of his luggage, but he must choose between Margaret and Peter. The film is trumped up; it is synthetic; but boy it gets under your skin; and it makes you angry because you see every string that's pulled to make you cry. You won't quickly forget Fay Bainter among her pathetic charges. Nor will you forget Margaret O'Brien's effective performance as little Margaret. The grownups handle their rôles well but can hardly compete in appeal with the little cherubs.

The documentary film is a comparatively new branch of cinema, but one that has in the past few years risen to a position of esteem. One company that has done much to further the cause of the non-fiction film is March of Time whose monthly shorts are timely, well documented and handled in imaginative and exciting cinema style. Now M.O.T. releases its second feature-length film. (The first was "The Ramparts We Watch.") *We Are the Marines* is really a detailed recruiting poster in moving pictures. Made in collaboration with the U. S. Marine Corps, without professional actors, it tells the story of the Marines in glowing terms, and states well their functions: "to parry the first blows struck against us, to smash back with our first counter-blows, to stay up there punching in the very front lines as long as there is anyone left to punch." After stressing their past glories, the film takes us on maneuvers with the corps and then into real action with the men on an island in the Pacific shortly after Pearl Harbor. Although the film could have been edited more closely to make it shorter and more dramatic, it does succeed in showing us the stuff that the Leathernecks are made of. In the sequence in China when the men were told to avoid an incident with the Japs, in the epiosdes which show the Marines' heroic defense against all odds on the Pacific islands, on their long voyage to the South Seas, their landing and taking their first objective, we see the Marines as the hardened, fearless soldiers to whom we owe gratitude and respect. This film does much to help us know these fighting men for whom "war is strictly business," about which they have no illusions.

Nightmare is the kind of a chase thriller that keeps you on the edge of your chair. At its end all the explanation doesn't stack up very well or amount to much, but while

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the run is on, it is fast and thrilling. Stocky, solid Brian Donlevy portrays an American gambler in London whose place of business was blitzed. To get out of a rainstorm he breaks into Diana Barrymore's house. Miss Barrymore (very upper classes) propositions him. She has a body in her living room that must be gotten rid of. He's broke and a gambler—so why not? But that isn't the end of the body or the affair. One thing leads to another, and another leads to Scotland. The exciting chase, fraught with suspense, moves right along, involves a nest of saboteurs, some very staid Scottish folk and much fast thinking and action on the part of Donlevy. Dwight Taylor produced and wrote the film. Tim Whelan directed it to keep you interested while you're in the theater. The sets and music fit the intentions of this kind of melodrama. And the acting is perfectly suited to its requirements. Diana Barrymore registers just the right amount of pseudo-sophisticated hauteur. Brian Donlevy has just enough worldiness and amused tolerance to want to find out what makes a dame like that click. Gavin Muir plays the traitorous lord in the baronial mansion with "class" and sinister suavity. "Nightmare" won't make the best ten lists, but it does provide a 90-minute melodramatic skylark.

The trouble with *Seven Days' Leave* is that it has too many eggs in one basket—and while none of the eggs is really bad, none of the eggs is at its best. Two orchestras (Freddy Martin and his, and Les Brown and his) and two radio programs ("The Court of Missing Heirs" and "Truth or Consequences") and a flock of singers and entertainers: Ginny Simms, Mapy Cortes, "The Great Gildersleeve," Peter Lind Hayes, the dancing trio Lynn, Royce and Vanya, and Newcomer Marcy McGuire, all contribute. Somehow they all have something to do with Private Victor Mature (being very Victor Mature) who wants to marry Lucille Ball while he's on his week's leave so he can inherit a hundred thousand dollars. If you enjoy watching these people in action, you'll find the picture entertaining. Personally, I thought it would never end. Tim Whelan produced and directed. The result is scrambled eggs. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

A Year in Review

The House on Humility Street. Martin W. Doherty. Longmans. $3.00.

HERE is a warm book written breezily about one man's calling to the priesthood and his first awkward, anxious efforts to obey. The fact that the Voice's loudest tones reached him through the din of a newspaper man's routine of police reporting in boisterous Chicago, made the fusion of individual soul-analysis with comment on the collective vices of a great city's *unethicals* attainable. Because the author fuses well, his story bursts with interest and is readable.

When he crowds the family home, the night the neighbors came with gifts for him, with people "who had lived in and around Jerusalem" in the days when Jesus Christ was with us, the widow who gave her mite, Zacheus, Joseph of Arimathea, Peter and Andrew and Matthew the tax gatherer and the rest, we are ready to understand, with him, that actually they were Kate Mannix and Jim Collins and other folks from the parish. Yes, the elderly maiden ladies and the deathly-pale old man on the horsehair sofa in the front parlor could have been Mary and Martha and their resurrected brother, Lazarus. They were heartening him against the long journey to the American seminary on foreign soil where his final preparations for Holy Orders were to be made.

His days in Rome, one scholastic term, abbreviated by illness, give him one more opportunity to combine frank, good-natured viewpoints about the central city of Christendom and exhilarating language in explanation of his quest for priestly duties. Noticeably, he has little to say about Mussolini's march on Rome and Fascism's castor-oil era, though these were current and debated subjects.

The North American College at 30 Via dell'Umiltá, where he registered, has never been properly cameoed for history. It is mentioned less often, in the news dispatches, than Notre Dame, Fordham or the Catholic University in Washington, though its molding influence on the Church in America is undoubtedly greater than theirs. It is the Alma Mater of a high percentage of our American hierarchy and possibly of the officials of their Curiae, too. Its ideals of discipline touch every inch of the vast sweep of our American Catholic way of life and its traditions, flooding the memories of a legion of Alumni, have been assimilated everywhere, even if imperceptibly. Needless to add, the chief of these ideals, the most vigorous of these traditions, is reverential love for the person and the office of the Holy Father.

This is not to say that Father Doherty has supplied us with a history of his seminary from its founding days, when Pius IX reigned, to its temporary closing in advance of today's war. We are grateful because he has given us a flowing account of one student's close association with the events of a single year in the important history

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of a great institution. Perhaps he might have been less observant of the bareness of his assigned room or of the pink walls of the Propaganda lecture halls. Perhaps he might have noticed the fine architecture of the other Propaganda building on Piazza di Spagna where the Congregation and the College of Propaganda are housed, or the impressiveness of the column and statue of Our Lady Immaculate in front of it, or of many other things which you remember. You will be pleased with his selection of the dome of St. Peter's as a backdrop for his dreams and later, for his daily life as a Roman. The plainness of Pius XI's white cassock against a riot of purple, maroon and scarlet will linger with the reader as long as with the author, because in his choice of words he has spotlighted it with care. We are deeply indebted to him for a delightful book. JOHN P. BOLAND.

BIOGRAPHY

Without Fame. Otto Eisenschiml. Alliance. $3.50.

MR. EISENSCHIML is best known (probably he would prefer not to be) for a book on Lincoln's death, which was generally rejected as incredible, although some of the questions it raised were difficult to answer. In the first sentence of his preface to the present work he tells us that while the events he records are essentially true, he has at times used poetic license. In the account of his father's career, which follows next, he is obliged to paint the portrait of a character so divergent from the common run of humanity as to suggest genius or something worse. And finally he confides to us that one of the ways of making a living he discovered when he first came to this country was by writing for German and Austrian papers accounts of American doings and customs based upon what they expected and wanted to hear rather than upon the slightest foundation of fact.

All this is vaguely disturbing and calculated to arouse in the reader a skepticism which only gradually subsides as the author unveils one by one the episodes of an unusually varied and useful career, in which qualities of mind and heart are abundantly reflected. If there is still a hint of suspicion here and there it is one of undue credulity—nothing worse.

This career was predominantly that of a chemist, a profession to which he aspired from the age of twelve, and its central theme is the insufficiency of reward which even up to the present day has kept the vast majority of chemists obscure and "without fame." "Servants of mankind," he calls them, and the term "servant" is used in its pejorative sense—the world orders them about, but has little appreciation of their services or talents except in times of crisis when they are hurried to the front, but promptly forgotten again. But if that is his principal theme Mr. Eisenschiml writes of it without bitterness and with a loving insistence upon the happiness to be found in discovering the right solution for each problem, however petty. Out of his practical experience he narrates a hundred anecdotes highly informative for the most part, abounding in humor, and pointing in the direction of an unconventional, but genuinely human philosophy of life.

There is besides a lot of common-sense in what he has to say about such subjects as the shortcomings of profit-sharing; the workings of our jury system; and the value of technical experts in legal cases. He has one of those minds that looks behind the appearance of things. Eccentricity, he says, is valuable for the freedom it bestows upon the individual who practices it. Nor must we take leave of him without a word about his style, which is pleasantly colloquial with a marked tendency to apt metaphor and simile. Here are three examples culled from a single page in which he is speaking of the so-called "research chemist" and his failure to get on: "The *Meistersingers* had invaded chemistry and sat in judgment on the composers of chemical prize songs." "He had become an expert navigator of a ship that could not float." "Like a rare old book, they commanded either a big market price or else none at all." J. K. PAULDING.

I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century. John Andrew Rice. Harper. $3.00.

IN THIS extremely readable autobiography, the author draws attention to the fact that he has probably been fired from more institutions of higher learning than any other teacher on record. He was born a Southern Methodist of a good family ruined by the war between the States, an experience which enables him to write rather mercilessly both of the South and the church of his baptism. From Tulane University he went to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, and the delineation of the Oxford life and Oxford don is quite as acid as those of Methodism and the South. There followed years of teaching, first at the University of Nebraska under its redoubtable Chancellor, "Sam" Avery (treated by Mr. Rice with comparative urbanity) then at Rollins College under Hamilton Holt, formerly editor of the *Independent* ("Rollins was Holt" is the name of that chapter); finally to his own school, Black Mountain, in North Carolina which he has recently left in order to become a professional writer.

If good teachers are really born and not made, your teacher of Mr. Rice's original and independent calibre is often confronted with the dilemma of working under superiors whom he despises, in which case he inevitably gets fired, or of founding his own school, and being unable to like or trust his subordinates, in which case he fires himself. The only solution to the dilemma seems to lie in compromising—if ever so little—with one's own natural love of liberty and truth, and that is, precisely, what a man like Mr. Rice, spiritual exile from the Eighteenth Century, will not do. He is, most certainly, an interesting and often witty writer, and one wishes him all luck in his new career. CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

Second Sowing. Margaret Williams. Sheed. $3.50.

MANY ALUMNAE of the Sacred Heart should give each other for Christmas this life of Mother Mary Aloysia Hardey of the Society, foundress of Manhattanville and numerous other schools in the United States.

The title "Second Sowing" is well chosen, for Mary Ann Hardey was a pupil at the convent of Grand Coteau in Louisiana when Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, foundress of the Society, was directing it from France, and Blessed Rose Philippine Duchesne, one of its first members and its pioneer in America, was at Florissant near St. Louis. Mother Williams brings out vividly how level headed Mary Ann, once her vocation was evident, was trained to exercise her genius for authority, and to carry on and extend the work of the Society.

The historical background of each of the foundations is given in great detail, and, although Mother Hardey is sometimes lost sight of for too long a space, she emerges toward the end of the volume as the personality that she was, a balanced, deeply spiritual religious.

D. H. MOSELEY.

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FICTION

Thorofare. Christopher Morley. Harcourt, Brace. $2.75.

HERE is the familiar Morley; brittle, modern Kitty Foyle as though she had never been. He has not written more charming nostalgic pages than those in which he describes the life of the child, Geoffrey, in Thorofare, beginning with the "family knock" of Uncle Dan at the cottage door, when he returned from America; the languid English countryside undisturbed by the occasional cry of frustrated ambition from Dan's friend Harry who had stayed at home. Then the gay tumult of an ocean voyage at the beginning of the century; Dan, a professor of English at a girls' school near Baltimore, expanding in un-English social levity, Geoffrey falling all over the place, and Aunt Bee devastated because "that cometh so hard up which went so easy down."

The bulk of the book deals with the life of Geoffrey, now Jeff, *aet.* 12 to 21, in Maryland. The manner of narration is the familiar Morley episodic one, the style not brilliant enough to carry to scholastic interludes, the incidents light; a falling off from the earlier chapters. If you're a Morley fan, you'll like it but, looking for the Morleyesque phrase, we found it only in England. "Cream was not as serviceable as milk for the Oatmeal Game, which was to make a relief map of the river, showing the bathing beach and the harbor, and then with the milk filled in, this is high tide. . . . Of course he (Geoffrey) construed fealty as a form of kindness. . . . The subtle bittersweet (in a bookshop) of unsold classics and first editions. . . . He remembered that he had tried to stay awake; he knew by youth's shrewd guess that they were talking over his head in more senses than one, the cryptic dialect of age."

Later the same talk and comment but just a shade on the pedantic side, like a dentist in late afternoon sweating a bit over the cavities. EDWARD L. KEYES.

The Horn of Life. Gertrude Atherton. Appleton-Century. $2.50.

TO HER now extensive history of San Francisco, Mrs. Atherton adds some new chapters in "The Horn of Life." No doubt in its own world the story will make its strongest appeal through its mild reconstruction of a time of change for a self-enamored, complacent society. Here is no significant social criticism, no irony to speak of. We can trust Mrs. Atherton, however, as an observer of the snug inner circle of "first families" in the city that she loves; and she has chosen her time well, the years just after the last war, when the whole country quivered between the tensions of that struggle and the madness of materialism and inflation. Readers who do not savor the tidbits of local allusion will find more to interest them in this novel than in some others of the general sort.

For one thing, the story has authentic, if somewhat superficial, historical interest. Here Mrs. Atherton treats the early 1920's, years which flaunted themselves uninhibitedly in fiction still considered modern and daring, as a tidy museum exhibit. Though her temporal color is obvious and unsubtle, it recreates a fabulous time for readers old enough to remember such items as the snuffer-like cloche hat, the first appearance of silk stockings for fairly common wear, the rise of Los Angeles and Hollywood, the oil scandals, the horrors of bootleg liquor and the speak-easy, the impudence of the younger generation—no more likable in retrospect than in its flaming youth.

On behalf of the authors of the following "Catholic Books of the Year" Sheed & Ward wish to thank—

FATHER THOMAS J. REED, Editor of the Extension Magazine, who nominated John Farrow's PAGEANT OF THE POPES as "Catholic Book of the Year" in his review in the Chicago News.

FATHER JOHN LA FARGE, S.J., who, in his review in the May 24th issue of America, called DARK SYMPHONY "one of the Catholic Books of the Year."

FATHER RICHARD H. J. HANLEY, who chose THIS WAR IS THE PASSION as "Catholic Book of the Year" in his Christmas list in the Brooklyn Tablet.

JOHN J. O'CONNOR, whose Literary Cavalcade (syndicated in twelve Diocesan Newspapers) carried the following sentence in the issue of October 10th: "THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS has been selected by the Catholic Book Club as its October selection. It may well become their Book of the Year."

THE MEMBERS OF THE AWARD COMMITTEE of the Gallery of Living Catholic Authors, who selected Father Farrell's COMPANION TO THE SUMMA as "The most distinguished book of the year written by a member of the Gallery."

PAGEANT OF THE POPES, by John Farrow, with 14 Illustrations by Charlot, $3.50

DARK SYMPHONY, by Elizabeth Laura Adams, the Autobiography of a Convert, $2.50

THIS WAR IS THE PASSION, by Caryll Houselander, A Spiritual Classic of the War, $2.00

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS, by Christopher Dawson, a book to Win the Peace, $2.50

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Then, too, Mrs. Atherton's picture of post-war unrest appeals to us more strongly now than it could have done in all the years between. The theme has animated far more moving and deeply felt books than this, for "The Horn of Life" is essentially a light novel. It does not really convince us that its heroine is a powerful, enigmatic personality. A charming, handsome, and energetic young woman, Lynn Randolph certainly is; and having come home from her war-work in France, she has a hard time adjusting in disillusioned compromise to a thin, almost futile-seeming, civilian life. The very conventionality of the characters in the story brings close to us the question: Will this sort of thing happen again?

OLIVE B. WHITE.

HISTORY

The Perilous Night. Burke Boyce. Viking. $2.75.

WE ARE so accustomed to thinking of the American Revolution in terms of its great protagonists and its major issues that we forget that for the great majority of the people involved it was like any other historic episode —a confused and obscure and wearisome prolonged day-to-day actuality.

Most of the more heroic episodes of history are doubtless more uniformly exciting to read about than to live through anyway. But I am not sure that in concentrating, as we so often do, upon the great figures and the dramatic episodes of the long-time significances, we do not miss what is perhaps the most heroic aspect of a heroic period, and that is that ordinary men and women, partly by conviction, partly by circumstance, and partly by an innate human perseverance often beyond their conscious wisdom, are screwed up to endure the long drawn out day-to-day struggle that precedes any historic decision. It is the great merit of Burke Boyce's "The Perilous Night" that it shows us both the catastrophic impact of the Revolution upon the settled lives of ordinary men and women and at the same time illustrates the quite unpretentious tenacity and the patient, even if sometimes muddled, endurance with which they can support the exhausting rigors of a prolonged struggle.

To call Asa Howell ordinary is, however, to do him somewhat less than justice. He is really a very remarkable man with an unusual combination of sensitiveness and steadiness of mind and that thorough-going honesty and integrity that is the basis of character. Asa Howell would never have started the Revolution, this revolution or any other. But when he became aware of its issues, even through the immediate confusion through which they were presented to him, his sense of responsibility became an inescapable obligation. One feels that the quite untheoretic devotion to public interest and equally unbellicose tenacity of purpose were the foundation upon which the genius of the leaders was able to build their victory. Consequently, this is a very heartening book to read at a time like the present.

In its sometimes rather slow moving pages this book treats us to some very fine things—a really charming young girl, Tempy Ann, a dashing and perverse enough young hero of adventure to satify any romantic's taste, and a gallery of lesser country figures to give every-day substance to the presentation of the historic scene. One or two characters and situations do have a somewhat melodramatic flavor, but in general the presentation of every-day life is as sure and abundant as the York State landscape in which the story takes place. This is a close-up view of a corner of a great historic scene that loses nothing of dignity for the closeness of view and gives to an extraordinary degree homely conviction to some of our basic traditions.

HELEN C. WHITE.

SCIENCE

The Diffusion of Science. Jesse Lee Bennett. Johns Hopkins. $2.25.

THE AUTHOR cries for a revolutionary change in our method of disseminating scientific knowledge to all classes. He so cries intelligently and well, but, alas, he cries in a wilderness.

But before we get into the wilderness ourselves, let us outline the basic features of the book. He reviews the educational and social conditions of the past for contrast with the modern situation. From this historical presentation it is convincingly concluded that the present scientific age with all of its industrial accompaniments has greatly altered human interrelationships and has complicated the problem of diffusing scientific knowledge. In other words, it has made education more imperative and more difficult.

Education must do more than it did in the Middle Ages. Yet he finds our system of education unchanged from its medieval state. "America evolved a complicated and costly educational system beyond anything the world had imagined, but this system was new only in size, not in its basic nature."

It is pointed out that we must use our science for something besides physical knowledge; we must use it as a method of approaching educational problems, and, having developed a new technique for the diffusion of science, the viewpoint of the latter will banish the irrational taboos that harrass our complicated society. He is pretty optimistic about the affair too. He does not know he is in a wilderness.

The book is, as a whole, one of the most thorough condemnations of modern education that has been penned. And it would be difficult to refute the major arguments. Every literate person should read it and ponder its picture.

Though the general theme is sound there are many details with which one can readily take issue. For instance, the author thinks that the proper solution for our educational problems is one that rests on propaganda, international commissions to sell the scientific view to the people. Nobody has ever shown that basic reorganizations can be completely directed from above. Besides, the "above people" do not generally want change. That is why Jesse Lee Bennett cries in a wilderness.

J. MC A KATER.

TRAVEL

People of Poros: a Portrait of a Greek Island Village. Peter Gray. Whittlesey. $3.00.

ALL ABOUT the people and the life in the little island of Poros, where the author visited in 1937. This book will help to give Americans a very different picture of the average Greek than the one we often form through our acquaintance with them here. The Greeks that Peter Gray introduces to us are most winning people. Peasant people mostly, full of common sense, having great fun in life, open hearted, honest, lenient toward the weaknesses of human nature. Also deeply attached to their land, and the present war confirms this. The drawings of Muriel Hannah, lively and carefree, are much in keeping with the subject.

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

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The Inner Forum

IN ACCORDANCE with a *Motu Proprio* of Pius XII of December 1, 1940, and renewed again this year, the Christmas Midnight Mass may be celebrated in blacked out lands the day before, if the local Ordinary decrees it. It is permissible at any hour from noon on, provided the Mass ends in time to comply with blackout regulations. Cardinal Hinsley of Westminster, for instance, suggested that 12:30 P. M. would be most convenient for the greatest number. Priests who celebrate this Mass on Christmas Eve may offer up only two Masses—instead of the usual three Masses—on the Feast itself. By assisting at this Mass the faithful in blacked out lands fulfil their obligation of hearing Mass on Christmas Day.

Palestine is believed to be the scene of the inauguration of the custom of celebrating the three Christmas Masses. In the fourth century a Mass was celebrated at Bethlehem very early in the day; somewhat later a second Mass was offered up in the greater church at Jerusalem; the third Mass was said about noon time in the Church of the Resurrection. At Rome midnight Mass is said at Santa Maria Maggiore before the relic of the Crib. The second takes place at dawn in the Church of Saint Anastasia. The station for the Third Mass is Santa Maria Maggiore.

Each of the three Masses symbolizes an important aspect of the meaning of Christmas. It was at midnight that the angels brought the glad tidings to the shepherds and the first Mass commemorates that holy night which witnessed the birth of Jesus according to the flesh. The Introit and Gradual are taken from psalms that announce the coming of the Messias. The Mass at dawn commemorates the adoration of the shepherds and symbolizes the coming of the true Light, the radiance of the Word. The third Mass honors the eternal generation of the Word by God the Father and gives testimony of the dignity of the Son of God.

CONTRIBUTORS

W. H. AUDEN first became known when he won the Newdigate Prize at Oxford. Among his books are: "The Dance of Death," "Poems," "Look, Stranger," and "The Double Man." The text of his Oratorio, on which he has been working during the past year, has been completed; the music for it is being written by a young British composer, Benjamin Britten.

Helen ISWOLSKY, daughter of the well known Russian statesman and diplomat, is the author of "Soviet Man Now," "Light Before Dusk" and other books. She is a frequent contributor to THE COMMONWEAL.

Ferenc MOLNAR is a Hungarian dramatist, the author of "Liliom," "The Guardsman," "The Glass Slipper," and many other plays. He is now living in America.

Fray Angelico CHAVEZ, O.F.M., is a New Mexico poet and painter.

Rev. John P. BOLAND, formerly Chairman of the New York State Labor Relations Board, has returned to Buffalo.

J. K. PAULDING has long been a student of literature. He writes book reviews regularly for THE COMMONWEAL.

Cuthbert WRIGHT teaches English at Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.

D. H. MOSELEY frequently contributes articles and reviews to THE COMMONWEAL.

Edward L. KEYES is one of the founders of THE COMMONWEAL.

Olive B. WHITE is the author of a number of historical novels, the latest of which is "The King's Good Servant."

Helen C. WHITE teaches at the University of Wisconsin. She is the author of "A Watch in the Night" and other novels.

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Claire Huchet BISHOP is the author of several books for children, including this year's "The Man Who Lost His Head."

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